

Step 1: Assess Riparian Area Function Using the PFC Method

Completing a PFC assessment is an effective way to initiate a comprehensive and integrated riparian management process because it provides fundamental information for subsequent management, restoration, or monitoring actions. The focus of chapters 3 through 8 is to provide detailed instructions for conducting a PFC assessment, which consists of the following tasks:

- Identify the assessment area and assemble an ID team.
- Review existing information and delineate and stratify reaches.
- Determine the potential of the reach.
- Assess the reach and determine its functional rating (validate with monitoring data if necessary).

Step 2: Identify Riparian Resource Values and Complete Additional Assessments

Within the assessment area, identify resource values (which include habitat values) for the various reaches that will later be used to help establish priorities for management, restoration, and monitoring. Values include fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, livestock forage, sensitive plants, water quality, Endangered Species Act requirements, species of concern, special interest areas, etc. Although resource values are usually established at some level in a land use plan, values should generally be validated or refined at the reach scale.

Once values are identified, they may require additional assessment. A PFC assessment provides fundamental information regarding the physical function and condition of the riparian area; however, additional information is often needed to obtain a comprehensive assessment of riparian condition. Fish or wildlife habitat and water quality assessments are examples of additional resource assessments that may be needed to characterize overall riparian condition in preparation for subsequent activities. Often these assessments can be done simultaneously with the PFC assessment.

Step 3: Prioritize Reaches for Management, Restoration, or Monitoring Actions

Once resource values are identified, those values, along with the PFC assessment results, provide a basis for prioritizing reaches for management, restoration, or monitoring actions.

Although restoring function is a fundamental priority, some stream reaches at PFC may not be meeting other habitat or desired condition objectives and may also be a high priority for management, restoration, or monitoring due to legal mandates or other